

In the Claims:

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09/17/03  
1-6 (Cancelled)

1 ~~7~~. (Previously Presented) A method of identifying a compound that increases the activity of an endothelin converting enzyme (ECE) polypeptide, the method comprising:

contacting A $\beta$  with an ECE polypeptide in the presence of said compound; and  
detecting the amount of unhydrolyzed A $\beta$ ,

wherein a decrease in the amount of unhydrolyzed A $\beta$  produced in the presence of said compound compared to the amount of unhydrolyzed A $\beta$  produced in the absence of said compound is an indication that said compound increases the activity of an ECE polypeptide.

2 ~~8~~. (Original) The method of claim ~~7~~, wherein said ECE and said A $\beta$  are in a cell.

3 ~~9~~. (Original) The method of claim ~~7~~, wherein said unhydrolyzed A $\beta$  is detected using an immunoassay.

10. (Cancelled)

6 ~~11~~. (Original) A method of identifying a compound that has anti-hypertension activity but does not cause an increase in the level of A $\beta$ , the method comprising:

contacting A $\beta$  with an ECE in the presence of said compound;

detecting the amount of unhydrolyzed A $\beta$ , wherein lack of an increase in the amount of unhydrolyzed A $\beta$  produced in the presence of said compound compared to the amount of unhydrolyzed A $\beta$  produced in the absence of said compound is an indication that said compound does not cause an increase in the level of said ECE; and

determining the anti-hypertension activity of said compound.

7 ~~12~~. (Original) The method of claim ~~11~~, wherein the anti-hypertension activity of said compound is determined in an animal.

8 ~~13~~. (Original) The method of claim ~~12~~, wherein said animal is a spontaneously hypersensitive rat (SHR).

12 ~~14~~. (Currently Amended) A method of determining that an anti-hypertension compound or candidate compound does not cause an increase in the level of A $\beta$ , wherein said anti-hypertension compound or candidate compound is an ECE inhibitor, the method comprising:

contacting A $\beta$  with an ECE in the presence of said anti-hypertension compound or candidate compound; and

detecting the amount of unhydrolyzed A $\beta$ ,

wherein the lack of an increase in the amount of unhydrolyzed A $\beta$  produced in the presence of said compound compared to the amount of unhydrolyzed A $\beta$  produced in the absence of said compound is an indication that said compound does not cause an increase in the level of said ECE.

15-39 (Canceled)

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5 ~~40~~. (Previously Presented) The method of claim ~~8~~, wherein said cell is selected from the group consisting of H4 neuroglioma cells, CHO cells, and HUVEC cells.

4 ~~41~~. (Previously Presented) The method of claim ~~7~~, wherein said compound is selected from the group consisting of a nucleic acid, a polypeptide, a chemical compound, a bacterial extract, a fungal extract, and a plant extract.

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11 ~~42~~. (Previously Presented) The method of claim ~~12~~, wherein said unhydrolyzed A $\beta$  is detected in said animal.

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9 ~~43~~. (Previously Presented) The method of claim ~~11~~, wherein said unhydrolyzed A $\beta$  is detected using an immunoassay.

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10 ~~44~~. (Previously Presented) The method of claim ~~11~~, wherein said compound is selected from the group consisting of a nucleic acid, a polypeptide, a chemical compound, a bacterial extract, a fungal extract, and a plant extract.

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13 ~~45~~. (Previously Presented) The method of claim ~~14~~, wherein said unhydrolyzed A $\beta$  is detected using an immunoassay.

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14 ~~46~~. (Previously Presented) The method of claim ~~14~~, wherein said unhydrolyzed A $\beta$  is detected in an animal.

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16 ~~47~~. (Previously Presented) The method of claim ~~46~~, wherein said animal is a SHR.

15 ~~48~~. (Previously Presented) The method of claim ~~14~~, wherein said compound is selected from the group consisting of a nucleic acid, a polypeptide, a chemical compound, a bacterial extract, a fungal extract, and a plant extract.

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